

E 184

.G3 R37

THE GERMAN CHARACTER

ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FORMATION OF THE
AMERICAN NATIONAL CHARACTER



BY
AUGUST WILLIAM REINHARD

To the Faculty of the Dubuque German College
and Seminary, this lecture is, by permission, most re-
spectfully dedicated.

COPYWRIGHTED APRIL 1916 BY
AUGUST W. REINHARD

Dubuque Presbyterian Press
Print
DUBUQUE, IOWA.

MAY 17 1915 ©C.L.A. 434206

PREFATORY NOTE

This lecture was delivered for the first time in 1904 before the Presbyterian Ministers Association, of Portland, Oregon. It was then unanimously resolved that it be printed. Although thoroughly revised in its present form, it has remained true to its original irenic and Christian spirit. There is no war-talk in it. Its intention is to bring about a better understanding of the Germans, to remove misconceptions and prejudices. It is almost needless to say that within the scope of a lecture it was not possible to enter into every trait of the German character. The lecture is the fruit of painstaking study of the German language, literature and people, both in this country and during a tour in Germany. I speak from deep conviction and with the earnest desire to help form correct ideas concerning the Germans and German-Americans, and shall feel well rewarded if I succeed in some measure in the effort.

A. W. R.

Omaha, Nebraska.

The German Character:

Its Influence on the Formation of the American National Character.

During the preparation of this lecture, I had occasion to invite a woman to come and hear it. She asked me, On what subject will you speak? I answered, On the German character. "O," said she, "I did not know the Germans had a character."

The incident reminds of an anecdote that went through the press years ago. It tells of a man sitting in a railway car in conversation with a woman, who was overheard to remark, "I cannot bear the Germans, they are only good to sing and drink beer:

A young German happened to sit near by, and turning about he said, "Sir, kindly pardon me for interrupting you, but you said the Germans are only good to sing and drink beer. Can you tell me who is the most active Christian in England? and who is the greatest scholar in Oxford? and who is the most distinguished engineer in the "United States?"

The man gave an evasive reply.

"I will tell you," said the German. The foremost Christian man in England, is George Mueller, of Bristol; he is the foster-father of about one thousand orphans; he is a German. The most distinguished scholar in Oxford is Max Mueller, his "Chips from a German Workshop" are prized like so many jewels; he is a German. And the greatest engineer in the United States, is Roebing. He built the Suspension Bridge across the Niagara river, and also the Brooklyn Bridge; he is a German. So you see the Germans can do more than sing and drink beer."

The German character as such is good, and of the good qualities of the German character I wish to speak to you. The faults of any nation are known the world over; less so its

virtues. Nor is it any kinder to criticize a whole nation than an individual, remembering that we Americans, too, have national faults. But it is a pleasant, because a Christian duty, to discover the good qualities of our neighbors, all the more when we reap benefits from their good character.

With due respect for national pride, and with a tolerable allowance for national prejudices, it is safe to say the days of "knownothingism" are past. The present agitation against the Germans is not against the Germans or German-Americans in the United States, but against the German government. Moreover, the anti-German feeling in its incipiency was due to the bias of the press and the blood-ties of those who sympathize with the allied nations. The citizens of the United States, complex as they are in respect to nationalities, have learned to have faith in one another, and this confidence is growing. As members of our great commonwealth, we are working out the genius of our constitution, which recognizes all who accept our free institutions, keep our laws, and lead responsible lives. No man in the United States, is valued on account of his nationality, but for his good character and for his acceptance of American principles.

At the first glance, it might seem as if the people of this country were a conglomeration of all nations, devoid of a distinct national character. The fact is, there is not another nation existing whose character can be more clearly defined than ours. We strive for the highest individual freedom, consistent with the rights of others; a freedom based on righteousness, love, and truth. But since this country from the beginning, was comprised of various nationalities, it is obvious that our national character became the product of these various forces. The more the prejudices of the English, Irish, Scotch, Germans, Dutch, French, Spaniards, and others resident in the United States, have been overcome, the more their character has been amalgamated into one strong American character. "The mixture of allied races among us," says Herber Speer, "will produce a more powerful type of man than has existed hitherto."

Or to use the dramatic speech of Israel Zangwill—

“There she lies, the great Melting-Pot-listen! Can't you hear the roaring and the bubbling? There gapes her mouth-- the harbor where a thousand mammoth feeders come from the ends of the world to pour in their human freight. Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian, black and yellow-Jew and Gentile-yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross-how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God.”

Next to the English speaking element, the Germans have ever been the strongest constituent of this nation. Germans and their descendents who still speak or understand German, number about thirty millions. Thus they have been, and still are, contributing a large percentage to the upbuilding of our land and character. Just what that quota is, lies beyond the scope of this address. All this effort can attempt, is to point out the leading traits of the German character, to call attention to some of the notable achievements of the Germans in Germany and this land, and from these facts infer as to what influence has gone forth from the Germans in the formation of our national character.

The German's foremost trait of character, is *Innerlichkeit*. The English word inwardness, as used by Shakespeare in the sentence, “You know my inwardness and love,” and by Wycliffe, “Ye are not anguished in us, but ye are anguished in your inwardness,” exactly fits the idea. By it we are to understand the soul-life of the German, the man within himself, a life lived not for the sake of appearances, but first and last for its own sake. It is that simple life which Charles Wagner has so beautifully described in the chapter on “Notoriety”—

“The forms which move for good, remain invisible, even in our individual lives: what is best in us, is incommunicable, buried in the depths of us. And the more vital are these sensibilities and intuitions, confounding themselves with the very essence of our being, the less ostentations they are: they

think themselves profaned by exposure to the light of day. There is a secret and inexpressible joy in the possessing at the heart of one's being, an interior world, known only to God, whence, nevertheless, come impulses, enthusiasms, the daily renewal of courage, and the most powerful motives for activity among our fellow-men. When this intimate life loses its intimacy, when man neglects it for what is superficial, he forfeits in worth all that is given in appearance."

Thus the genial and versatile Parisian, in showing the world how man ought consciously and conscientiously to live his inmost life, unwittingly unfolds the character of his neighbor, the German. For *Innerlichkeit* is the essence of his being, the mainspring of his actions, the quality by which every thing else must be measured. The very fact that the word *Innerlichkeit*, with its various derivatives, is used so extensively in the German language, while the word inwardness is used so little by us as to be almost obsolete, shows strikingly the difference between the two characters.

The second fundamental trait in the German character is **thoroughness**. By virtue of his *Innerlichkeit* the German is a profound thinker, a thorough student, a man of research, on account of which his institutions of learning have become foremost in the world. This also explains why most German philosophers are idealists. The world of mind is all the world to him. He loves to dwell on underlying, abstract thought. He is highly prolific of theories. His mind is constantly inquiring, What is back of the phenomena? In dealing with concrete science, he will investigate the first causes. Thus Helmholtz became the great physiologist, Virchow the founder of modern pathology, and Koch the discoverer of the bacillus tuberculi.

We Americans, on the other hand, have a distinct preference for practical knowledge. We are an inventive people. Our ingenuity is known the world over. We are a nation of experts. But we are inclined to be superficial.

In our educational methods, we have suffered for centuries from a lack of thoroughness. American schoolmen have labored under the delusion that a scholar should cover as

many branches as possible, rather than know less and know them well. In my own college days, we read a half or a third of a Latin or Greek classic; no German professor would stop short of the whole book. Says Charles Skinner, State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction of the State of New York—

“More and more there is a tendency to overcrowd courses of study. This tendency is not confined to schools of a particular class, but is, perhaps, more marked in the higher grades. Our schools are evidently trying to cover too much ground within a specified time. Our children are hurrying too fast from one grade to another, from one subject to another, without mastering the successive steps by which they expect to rise. There is danger of our becoming a nation of poor spellers, readers, and writers. Arithmetic, geography, and grammar, are thrown aside too early after insufficient study, and pupils are hurried through essential subjects to give more time for experiments and “fads”. We are not teaching our pupils thoroughness. They rush through their terms and often graduate too young; more often carelessly educated, if we can really say they are educated at all.”

In respect to thoroughness in our educational methods, great improvement has been made, due, in a large measure, to German influence. To say that German schools lead the world at present, is to state an undeniable fact, indeed, in such high esteem are German universities held in our country that the Johns Hopkins University has made the German university its model, and the schools and universities of Germany were thronged with American students before the war broke out. German universities, German conservatories, and German art studios, have become the Meccas of all nations, notably of Americans.

The United States has come wonderfully to the front in the art of painting, but have not all our great artists studied in Munich? Are not the German art galleries the admiration of all the world?

There are four great art galleries in Germany; the Royal Gallery, of Dresden; the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, of Berlin;

the Royal Gallery, of Hesse-Cassel, and the old Pinakothek, of Munich: whereas France has only one—the Louvre; England two—the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection, and Russia only one—the Erimatage in St. Petersburg.

At the International Exhibition at Venice few years ago, two entire rooms were assigned to Stuck's exhibits, and one to Zorn's, who of all artists in the world were chosen for this distinction, and they were Germans.

German literature of the last eighty years presents a hall of fame by itself. Goethe, Schiller, Eucken Wundt, Eduard von Hartmann, Ernst von Mach, Uhland Rueckert, Schlegel, Tieck, Buerger, Emmanuel Geibel, Freiligrath, Grillparzer, Hebbel, Ludwig, Gustav Freytag, Ludwig Fuidt, F. C. Meyer and F. W. Nietzsche, are some of the names that shine bright in the German literature of this age.

It is a most noteworthy fact, too, that by the book of a French authoress, "De l'Allemagne," by Madame de Stael, German literature, at one stroke, became a force in Europe. It was this brilliant mind who made the high assertion that of all modern literature, the German is the only one that breathes the spirit of immortal youth, and that in it are to be found the highest ideals of liberty.

If Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell" is an illustration of German literature in this particular respect, then Madame Stael has said true. It might be worth while to quote here the concluding words of the great drama—

"Bertha—Peasants! Conferderates! Into your league
Receive me here, that happily am the first
to find protection in the land of freedom.
To your brave hands I now entrust my rights.
Will you protect me as your citizen?"

Peas.—Ay, that we will, with life and fortune both!

Bertha—'Tis well! And to this youth I give my hand.

A free Swiss maiden to a free Swiss man!

Rudenz—And from this moment all my serfs are free!"

Noteworthy, also, is the masterful language of C. F. Meyer and Friedrich W. Nietzsche. The latter discovered pos-

sibilities in the German language of which the classical masters knew nothing; his rhythmic periods combine the dignity of Luther with the dithirambic style of Hoelderlin. It is clear and terse and free from those elements known as "deutsch und schwer." "From an artistic point of view, Nietzsche's work, **Also sprach Zarathustra**, is a wonderful beautiful book; the fulness of its thought and its grandiose Biblical language make it one of the master-works of modern literature. No reader can be insensible to the beauty of passages like those on the **Grosze Sehnsucht**, or the following lines from **Von Den Sieben Siegeln**—

"Wenn ich je dem Meere hold bin und allem, was Meeres-art ist, und am holdesten noch, wenn es mir zornig widerspricht:

Wenn jene suchende Lust in mir ist, die nach Unentdecktem die Segel treibt, wenn eine Seefahrerlust in meiner Lust ist:

Wenn je mein Frohlocken rief: "die Kueste schwand— nun fiel mir die letzte Kette ab—

Das Grenzenlose braust um mich, weit hinaus glaenzt mir Raum und Zeit, Wohlauf! Wohlan! Altes Herz!

O wie sollte ich nicht nach der Ewigkeit bruenstig sein und nach dem hochzeitlichen Ring der Ringe—dem Ring der Wiederkunft!" *

This quotation, however, has reference only to Nietzsche's beautiful language, not to his philosophy.

In the field of applied science, the Germans have greatly distinguished themselves. Virchow in cellular pathology and archeological anthropology; Liebig in carbon compounds; Helmholtz in zoology; Billroth in surgical fame; Professor Ehrlich in salvarson, and Roentgen in the X-rays. The whole world owes a debt of gratitude to these men.

Then in other things. The two German scientists, Bunsen and Woehler, invented aluminum, and a still lighter metal has been invented for the Zeppelins, which however, is kept a secret. The Germans also invented the railway car box and have developed the rail and block system, and are the originators of the Pintsch gas light system. The Brooklyn Bridge

* J. G. Robertson-History German Literature.

and the New York Subway were built largely by German engineers.

And do you know that Siemens is a greater inventor than Edison? It was Siemens who gave the world the modern-dynamo-electric machine, upon which, more than anything else, the success of electric lighting and all the modern applications of electricity depends. In other words, he made possible the electric light. Electric plating is also his invention. He built the first electric street-car in 1879, which he exhibited that year at the Berlin Exposition. He also is the man who first operated a 180-volt third rail line at the same Exposition, which Edison used a year later for his Menlo Park locomotives. The firm of Siemens and Halske are the greatest electrical engineers in Europe, and the largest deep-sea cable manufacturers in the world. Siemens laid six trans-Atlantic cables, and discovered the method of locating a break in a cable under the ocean. He also invented the ticker-machine. His brother Friedrich Siemens invented the glass furnace.

And how about the automobile and the airship? It is a German, Daimler, whose invention of the modern gas engine made possible the invention of the automobile. Daimler was the first man who used a gas engine to run a motor cycle. That is why the Selden patent was knocked out in the United States Supreme Court a few years ago. And were not the German automobiles, the "Benz" and the "Mercedes," the great prize winners?

Lilienthal, a German, made the first successful flight in an airplane, paying the price of the experiment with his life.

Please remember, also, it was the Diesel engine that wrought such a great revolution in the propelling of steamboats and airships. He was a German.

The telephone was the invention of Philip Reis, another German. The Bell telephone is but an improvement on it. The United States Court came pretty near annulling the Bell patent.

Two German professors invented the Jena glass, which makes photography and moving pictures possible. The Zeiss and Goertz lenses rank as the best in the world. The Baratha

paper and chemicals used in photography, are of German manufacture.

The Welsbach, Tungsten, Nerst, and Pintsch lights, are all German inventions, as is also the nitrogen light, used with such brilliant effect at the Panama Pacific International Exposition.

The art of printing was invented by Gutenberg, and the great lineotype by Ottomar Mergenthaler, a German immigrant.

The Mauser rifle, the Maenlicher gun, the Krupp cannon, and the sub-marine boats are all German inventions. *

These things have entered into our daily life, and for the sake of gratitude the names of these men should stand high in our estimation.

It cannot be denied, however, that German thoroughness sometimes leads to pedantry which may be amusing. It is said of the German poet Uhland that he never wrote a letter without reviewing it, and whenever he found it necessary to scold his cook, he would first write out the reprimand, commit it to memory, and then deliver it. It must have been a great honor for his cook to be scolded in such a refined literary and oratorical manner, and it is to be regretted that Uhland did not publish some of these culinary philippics so that the literary world after him might have an idea of just how to acquit itself of that critical duty, without sacrificing anything to literary style and effect.

In matters of knowledge, the German would see deep; in his heart life he desires to feel the full warmth of his love; but when he exercises his will, he glories in the strength of his determination. His will, therefore, is a part of his Innerlichkeit; this is so strong that it marks him at once as an individualist.

Of the two manifestations of the soul-life, the intellect and the will, the will is the constant element, the intellect the movable. The will is in itself void of content; not until influenced by the intellect or feelings can it make itself known. If the will be the stronger factor, it will force both intellect and feelings into subordination; if, however, the intellect of

* **German Culture**, by Frantz von Franzius.

feelings predominate, the will will be less vigorous.

In the German the will refuses to act until well instructed by the intellect or impelled by the feelings, and because both must be consulted thoroughly, he is not so quick to act as the Frenchman, Englishman, or American. However, after the intellect and feelings have been properly taken into account, he will press on to his purpose with indefatigable endurance. His English and American brothers force the intellect into subordination of the will; therefore they are realists. They expect quick results, and they get them; but often at a cost for which they did not reckon. The German wants to know the reason why, and considers carefully before he presses forward; but when his mind is made up, no difficulty is too great for him to surmount. In this respect the German is like George Washington, of whom Thomas Jefferson says: "His mind was great and powerful.....it was slow in operation, sure in conclusion.....Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance was maturely weighed, and when once decided, going through with all his purpose, whatever, obstacle opposed." Here Saxon meets Saxon.

Such intelligent persistency is bound to develop strong individualists, of whom the German people abounds. One needs only to study the lives of Charlemagne and Luther, the greatest personalities of the German history, to see how powerful German individualism is and acts. Luther, notwithstanding his deep humility, once said of himself: "I am a man well known in heaven, on earth, and in hell."

We are, therefore, not surprised to find individualism a fundamental feature in German literature. To delineate the character of the individual man from the view-point of his inner life, rather than from his relation to society, has ever been the aim of German authors. From the early "Fragment of Hildebrand to His Son Hadubrand", down through all history, biography, novels, poetry, and stories, the hero is represented as working out his greatness by his own inner self, and it is for this reason that Goeth's **Faust** has become the greatest production of German literature; for **Faust** represents

the inner life of Goethe, dramatized by the poet's genius.

Such formation of character, being original, the personality having shaped into his being all the forces that lie within him, is self-existent. He is a psychological self-made man, as compared with the self-made professional or business man in the United States; he is a man of strong convictions, who knows just what he wants. It might be a profitable and very interesting thing to study from this view-point the character of the present Kaiser.

This trait of character lies so deeply imbedded in the German mind that it is amusing to see to what degree of sentimentality he is reduced by it. It reminds of the German whom the poet Coleridge met in Frankfort, who always took off his hat with profound respect when he ventured to speak of himself.

It is simply ludicrous to see how the German individualizes himself in his correspondence. If he writes a letter to a tailor, or contractor, or architect, he must not fail to state on the envelope: Mr. Tailor-master Schmitt, Mr. Contractor Braun, Mr. Architect-Schneider; as an American was once unkindly remarked, "If Mr. Lange is a garbage collector, don't forget, in addressing a letter to his wife to say, Mrs. Carbage Collector Lange."

But strong as his consciousness of himself as an individualist may be, it is not so strong as that of his Anglo-Saxon brothers, the English and Americans, who write **I** with a capital letter, and **you** with a small letter, even in direct address; the German inverts the order.

This trend of the German character, while undoubtedly innate with the German tribes, has ever been fostered by the indoor habits of the German, the cold, raw northern climate compelling him to spend a large part of the year in the house; and in the early days of Germany, the country was sparsely settled, isolating the individual families.

Following the long, hard winter, Germany enjoys a prolonged spring; the heavily laden fruit and nut trees, the clean fields, the well kept forest, to say nothing of such scenery as the Rhine and the Schwarzwald affords, makes the land ap-

pear like one great garden. No wonder that it draws out the deep joy of the German breast and that Germany is a land of song and music.

This accouts in a large measure for the German's **Gemuetlichkeit**, a word for which the English language has no equivalent. What are we to understand by it?

Depth, warmth, sympathetic feelings; a tranquil state of the mind; cordiality, congeniality, sociableness; good-naturedness, companionship; as to environments-comfort. As we speak of a cozy room or chair, so the German finds his room, chair, coat, pipe, or even friend, **gemuetlich**.

Perhaps the most powerful agency by which the German Gemuet is transmitted into our American soul life, is German music. It unquestionable takes the lead of all music. What musical creations, for example, have become such cherished and sacred favorites with us as Haendel's *Messiah* and Haydn's **Creation**? And why? Not only because their subjects are of such a lofty character, but also because they give such deep expression to the heart. Let us inquire into this.

What is music?

It will answer our purpose to class it under two heads: that which pleases the ear, and that which speaks to the soul.

Italian music seeks preeminently to please the ear. It is sweet, melodious, even; clear and transparent in its harmony; simple in its rythm; consistent in its development. Its first aim is the aesthetic effect. It imposes no burden on the understanding; develops no dialectic processes; avoids entanglements—in short, Italian music is of light character, and is, therefore, popular.

The German, on the other hand, speaks by the symbols of music, from the depths of his large soul, and appeals to all there is in man. The word oratorio is quite significant as a German musical designation. In his music he does not ask if he pleases or pains, whether it is easy or difficult of interpretation; he expresses life as it is, especially German life.

German composers are strong individualists. If you would understand German music, study the author, his life and character. Take, for an example, the world's greatest

musical genius-Beethoven. Why does his music so mightily stir the human breast? Because in it he has wedded the highest genius to strong characters. In his great compositions he is marshalling before you heroes and great events in history. Now in strains of heart-breaking sorrow; now in melting pathos; now in the clash of arms; now in raptures of heavenly joy. In it all, he is telling you the sad story of his life. What Beethoven's great affliction was, we all know; he was deaf, in his latter years so deaf that when his celebrated Ninth Symphony was rendered in Vienna, he could hear nothing of the music, nor the tremendous applause. Friends turned his chair around so that he could see the waiving of hats and handkerchiefs. His works are the fruits of bitter sorrow, the results of a passionate but consciously painful strife for ideal aims. He who had given to the world enjoyment and elevation of the heart, should himself drink the bitter cup of being deprived of the sense of hearing. But how grand is the spectacle of an artist, deprived of all intercourse with what to him in this world was dearest, and yet pouring forth the lonely aspirations of his soul, all the more sublime as we seem to hear in them the innermost spirit of mankind! In Beethoven we have the extraordinary illustration of how, in the hands of God, affliction may further sublimate the efforts of an artist, even if, on the other hand, they poignantly intensified his sufferings as a man; indeed, it is thought that the deafness of Beethoven drove him into the innermost resources of his soul. With this commentary in hand, we are in a position to understand the wonderful music of Beethoven.

Bach, Haydn, Haendel, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Richard Wagner—have they not by their high art brought heaven nearer to this sin-stricken earth? Have they not given an inexplicable uplift and enjoyment to the human heart? God blest the day when these German masters were born, and we hold their memory in loving remembrance.

In the realm of affections, the inner life of the German makes itself known by tender love. The conjugal love of the German is self-respecting, it is even more, it is holy. The Ro-

manic nations see in woman, first of all, sex, and if she be intellectual the charm is heightened. But the German, by virtue of his Innerlikkeit, beholds in woman an object of veneration. He feels that in her slumber powers of the soul that lovingly supplement his inner life: a contemplative mind a prevision, a thoughtfulness which outweighs and corrects his own impulsive nature. Tacitus observes this when he says: "Alliquid sanctum et providum," meaning there is something sacred and prophetic about German women. This trait of the German woman's character is finely delineated in Goethe's *Iphigenie Auf Tauris*.

What German music is to the ear, German home-life is to the heart. It is in the home of the German where his Gemuet comes to its fullest expression. It is touching to read in the charming book of Heinrich Seidel how Leberecht Huehchen, in spite of his deep poverty, makes his home the dearest place on earth for his family.

In traveling through Germany, you will observe that the private houses do not present a large gable-end toward the street. Nor are the gardens in the front. The German home shuts itself off from the outside world. It is in the interior of the house and in the garden in the rear, where the home-life makes itself known.

The German home is a model of cleanliness and order. The neatness of the fields, forests and country at large, finds its explanation in the cleanliness of the homes. How could his home be gemuetlich otherwise? If, during the middle ages, a German had committed a mortal sin, one of the commonest punishments inflicted by the church, was to deprive him for one week of his daily bath. This is important, for external cleanliness exerts a good influence on the heart. We find it so in the German. Corresponding to his habits of cleanliness, we find a good moral atmosphere in German homes. History informs us that of all pagan tribes, the Germans were the only ones who did not practice polygamy. When the Germans worshipped Wotan, Donar, Nerthus, and Frija, monogamy was so strict a law that a wife who committed adultery, was shorn

of her hair, unclothes, and whipped through the streets of the village.

The German home is a hearth of gladness. Germans are not afraid to rear large families of children, and they spare no means to educate them. Song and music is a part of the family life. Relatives and friends visit freely in the home, eine gemuetliche Tasse Kaffee is always served, and thus the sociable good nature of the German manifests itself in his home-life. Withal there is a spirit of simplicity, contentment, and cheer so that even the poor man in Germany finds true happiness in life.

Beautiful is the respect and affection that German children show their parents. There is no Christian nation on earth that has better bred children than the Germans. They obey, will not talk back, and are polite to their elders.

Heinrich Seiled, in his book, **Leberecht Huehnchen**, tells the story of a young man twentyseven years old who loved a girl five years his junior. The young man asks the father for the hand of the maiden, but is stoutly refused. They agree to wait until the father will consent. Twentyfive years pass by, but the father remains obdurate. A friend suggests to celebrate the silver engagement. The sorry festival is really held. The friend proposes to the young people who are now respectively fortyseven and fortythree years old to marry without the father's consent.

"O, no," answers the lover: "if we marry without father's consent, there will be no blessing: we must wait."

Would not our American youth have a happy wedding in spite of the "old man"? But that is what the Germans call "frommes Gemuet."

To do justice to the good nature of the German, mention should be made of his wit and humor. Every nation has humor peculiar to itself. German humor differs from English and American, in that it indulges little in smart sayings. The pun, so extensively used in America, is only sparingly indulged in by the German. He is not sprightly like the Frenchman, nor quick in his conclusions like the American. His

nature is to be naive, bland, grotesque, dry. The greatest German humorists are men of deep pathos.

Where is there in all literature a humor more choice than that of Fritz Reuter? Now you are bathing your face in tears of pathos, and now you are rolling in convulsions of laughter. Figures like the farmer Havermann, the amusing Fritz Tridelfritz, the good "Frau Pastorin," and a dozen others, crowned by the inimitable "Entspekter," Unkel Braesig, are charming humorous portraits, and alone sufficient to establish Reuter's place in the front ranks of German novelists. Being written in a dialect, translation is out of question; but it is to be regretted that these exquisitely written books cannot be given to the whole world.

Other eminent humorous writers of this age, are Wilhelm Busch, the Mark Twain of Germany, Wilhelm Raabe, and Heinrich Seidel.

The following story is of a German in the United States, illustrating naive humor.

A certain German, owner of a small house, had affected an insurance on it of eight hundred dollars, although it had been built for much less. The house burnt down, and the company refused to pay more than its actual value, about six hundred dollars. "If you wish," said the cashier of the insurance company, "we will build you a house larger and better than the one burnt down, as we are positive that it can be done for even less than six hundred dollars."

To this proposition the German objected, and at last was compelled to take the six hundred dollars.

Some weeks after he had received the money, he was called upon by the same agent who wanted him to take out a policy of life insurance on himself or his wife.

"Nein, nein, you 'surance fellows be all tiefs. Ven I insure mine wife, und mine wife ties, und I go to de office to get mine two tousand Thalers, do I get de money? O, nein! you will say to me, "Sie vas not vort two tausand Thalers, sie vas vort bout six hundred. Ven you don't like die six hundert Thalers, ve vill give you a bigger and a better wife!"

In no respect does the German character reveal itself

stronger than in **religion**. Even in the days of heathendom the German, like the American Indian, worshipped no idols; and today, in the literary classes, where men have broken away from the positive Christian religion, you will find a form of religion, the so-called unconfessional religion, almost every man working out views peculiar to himself. The German cannot shut God out of his thoughts, however far he may have wandered away from the God of the Bible; and it is a noteworthy fact of history that the first German production of German literature is Ulfilas' translation of the Bible into German, and that the greatest work of all German literature is Doctor Martin Luther's translation of the Bible. Goethe was once asked where he learned his masterful German, and he answered, in Luther's Bible. This Bible has gone over into the very marrow and sinews of the German people.

The chief characteristic of German religiousness is piety. The German loves to speak of the "frommes Gemuet." The first words one of my German professors taught his children to say were. "Abba, dear Father".

In Germany most children are baptized soon after their birth. This is done in the deep consciousness that they belong in the Kingdom of God. No Christian people are more faithful in the religious instruction of their children than the Germans. In early years they are taught the Bible in the form of a story of the Bible, the catechism with about three hundred Bible verses, and the choicest hymns.

Almost everybody goes to church in Germany, generally speaking. German soldiers are compelled to attend divine services. Besides the regular Sunday services, a special war service is held every Thursday, and the churches are filled to their utmost. In many localities the churches are not large enough to contain all who wish to attend, in which places several services are held on the same day. No matter how great the distance, or how inclement the weather may be, the grown members of the family will go to church. If any one is hindered from going, the parting word is, Pray for me.

This is especially true of Christmas. The German would not think of lighting his tree or disturbing his pres-

ents before having gone to church. And here it may be said that the Christmas tree is not a survival of the Yulefest, it is a distinct Christian and German invention. Christmas trees were first trimmed in the early part of the seventeenth century, in Alsace, in the neighborhood of Strasburg. The candles were added a long time afterward by the Swedes. Assuredly the Christmas tree has heightened the joy of all children of Christendom, and by it the German reveals his vivid conception of the nativity—the night lit up with the glory of God.

In the homes various traits of piety manifest themselves. In every German home you will find a Bible, a hymnal which is both sung and read, and in most homes, sermon and prayer-books.

On the exterior of many houses in rural regions, Biblical verses, or Christian poetical inscriptions, are found; while on the walls of the rooms, Christian wall cards are displayed.

In some farming districts, the farmer, while he sows his seed, repeats some such sentence as, "With God," "May he bless it," "In His Name." In some localities, on the day, when the first fruits are gathered, the people go to church to dedicate the harvest to God. On the evening, on coming home from the field, the housewife, as she lights the candle, may be heard to say, "Light, dear Lord, after this life, the lamp of heavenly light for us."

The public benevolent institutions in Germany are manned largely by men and women who have been trained in Christian schools, while the number of deaconesses who nurse the sick, raise the fallen, and look after the poor, and neglected children, aggregates many thousands.

Germans proudly claim that the aged, the sick and the disabled, are better cared for in Germany than elsewhere, and that nowhere do the workers enjoy better conditions of labor. From 1885 to 1911 over twenty millions was paid by the government in pensions to these classes.

Let me call your attention to another strong and leading trait in the German character—his indefatigable **industry**. Whether the German be a peasant, or an artisan, or a scholar,

he is a hard-working man. Inactivity, says the German, is our greatest enemy. This is necessarily so. In his climate no zephyr winds fan him to sleep, no luscious fruits grow of their own accord, and the land is densely populated. The German must either work or die. But he naturally loves to work. How strongly this trait is stamped on the German character, may be seen from the fact that every male member of the royal family must learn a trade. The present Kaiser is by trade a glove-maker; his brother Henry, a watch-maker; to say nothing of the severe discipline under which the Hohenzollern are brought up.

With the German's strong habits of industry, go hand in hand frugality, economy, and thrift. It was pathetic to read that the German soldiers, who receive twelve cents a day, sent to their families twentyfour millions of dollars during the first six months of the war.

To German industry the United States owes very largely its development. As tillers of the soil, German farmers rank unexcelled in the whole world. With industry they combine simple habits of life, and, therefore, thrive. You will find them in large numbers in every state of the Union. In Wisconsin there are counties in which, until recent years, little English was spoken. Nor is there a state in which they have not numbered as pioneers. From their sons and daughters who have been brought up under American influences and educated in American schools, all our large cities have drawn a heavy quota of staunch citizens, men and women who count for physical strength and firm character. Of the Germans, Thomas Jefferson said, in 1787: "Of all settlers, I prefer the Germans. They are bound to make our best citizens."

In a like proportion, the Germans have contributed to the manufacturing and commercial interests of the land. The first glass factories and iron foundries, were erected by Baron von Stiegel. The water works along the Manockisy, built by German Moravians, served as models for New York and Philadelphia. The first flat boat on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, was made by a German. Two Germans were the first white men to cross the Alleghenies; on a stately

oak of Old Barren, can this day be seen the names of five Germans who were associates of Boone. The Germans were the first white men to plant potatoes in Pennsylvania and Kentucky, and it must be admitted, they built the first brewery in the United States!

In colonial days the richest merchant was Jacob Astor, the father of "O" "K", meaning, all good, which he pronounced "oll kut."

It is also a fact of history that German schools of the colonies, were recognized to be the best, in fact, they were looked upon as models. Representative Prosser says, "The only four regiments in the last (civil) war, in which every man could write his name, were German regiments.

History also informs us that some of our foremost abolitionists were Germans. Pastorius, the man of universal knowledge, the leader of German mass immigration, moved the citizens of Pennsylvania to present the question of negro emancipation to the State Legislature. The German Moravians joined in the fight. Wherever the Germans set their foot on southern soil, the first thing they did was to liberate their slaves. Never, in the history of the German people, was there such a thing as keeping slaves known. They were the first to erect schools for the negro. Note, how the Germans in this respect helped form the American character.

If, on account of these and other virtues, we have learned to respect and love the Germans, our love becomes pathetic when we consider his loyalty to the Stars and Stripes. Never was there a battle fought in behalf of American liberty but what, when the roll was afterward called, there were German names, often many, to which no response came. In the French-English war, the German settlements formed the outposts against the enemy. German regiments repelled the first assaults of the English Tories and Red-skins. Under the leadership of the German General Herkimer,* peace was purchased at the battle of Oriskany. He was also the first to unfold the Stars and Stripes on an American battlefield. The order had come from Washington that the Stars and Stripes

* His name was Herkheimer.

should form the American flag. But the battle was on, and in all haste, General Herkimer improvised a flag by using the red shirt of a soldier, the blue blouse of another, and the white petticoat of a woman.

This tale of German bravery was told over in the Wyoming Valley, along the Savannah and Congerree, in Pennsylvania, the Virginias and Carolinas. The names of Meister, Mueller, Schmeisser, Dritt, Fabiger, Kalteisen, Hueger, and the excellent Muehlenberg, have gone into colonial history, while the names of Steuben und DeKalb, have been immortalized by the towns and countries named after them.

In the war of the rebellion, the names of so many German Generals as Sigel, Kiefer, Steinwehr, Kautz, Osterhaus, Wilfig, Schimmelpennig, Weitzel, and Salomon, give us an idea how large the number of German privates must have been, and the fact that of one regiment of three hundred and fifty men, only fifty survived, proves the valor with which these men fought.

Of a German Presbyterian minister it is said that when his company began to flee before the enemy, he, in the hail of lead, rallied his men to renewed action, and won the day. Our brother has answered the last roll-call, but the memory of John Berk abides.

In his book, **On The Trail Of The Immigrant**, Professor Steiner says—"The German in America has not produced many great men, but he has filled the country with good men, which is infinitely better. The cause of the dearth of prominent Germans is due to the fact that "(with the exception of the Scandinavians)" they blend more quickly than any other foreigners with the nation's life, especially if the German reaches any degree of eminence; and the effect which he has had upon the nation, is difficult to trace just because of that."

We, in whose veins flows German blood, whether we were born in Germany, or, like myself, are the American offspring of German parents, may well be proud of the people from whom we descend. From the days of Charlemagne down through the reformation to the present day, the German people have stood for the highest culture the world possessess; and

whatever the outcome of this terrible struggle may be, like the bird Phoenix rising from his ashes, the Germans will again rise and continue to contribute to the world the good things that have made their name famous .

“The German-Americans need not apologize for the “hyphen.” They have good reason to be proud of it. They take in full measure all the word “American citizen implies. Look about you! German mind, German brain, German muscle, German industry, German efficiency everywhere. In business they are models of honor, industry and success; in farm life, their homes become the charm of the countryside; as law-abiding citizens, they are unsurpassed by any race of people.”

That the German-Americans are pro-German, needs no explanation. The man with German blood in his veins, would be a traitor to himself, a most unnatural man, if he should feel no sympathy with the German people in their terrible struggle. It is an instinct of human nature to respect one's own blood. The German, the Frenchman who will deny the nation whose blood flows in his veins, is an unnatural man, for whom his fellows can feel only the deepest contempt. The fact is, the feelings have been so tense on both sides that passion has run as high on one side as on the other, as President Wilson said in one of his Kansas speeches.—

“Some men of foreign birth have tried to stir up trouble in America, but, Gentlemen, some men of American birth have tried to stir up trouble, too. If you were to listen to the councils that are dinned into my ears in the executive office at Washington, you would find some of the most intemperate of them came from the lips of men who had for generations been identified with America, but who for the time being are so carried away by the sweep of their sympathies that they have ceased to think in the terms of American traditions and American policy.”

As citizens of the United States, the German-Americans are loyal to the heart. It is America first. No citizen of German extraction has called the constitution of this country in question, the question has not at all been one of political or national principles, but rather of natural sympathy, and of the

policy of this government to supply the allied nations with munitions of war. To them as well as to the millions of others who are not of foreign descent, this seems a moral wrong, and what is morally wrong can never be legally right. But that has nothing to do with the loyalty of the German-Americans, for that loyalty is true.

As a German-American, I have no apology to offer for saying that my father, who was born in Germany, fought four years in the civil war. He helped fight the fearful battle of Gettysburg until every round of his ammunition was shot away. There is absolutely nothing in the life of my father that I am so proud of as of his willingness to lay down his life for the liberty of the black man, and thus preserve the ideals of this country.

But, notwithstanding, what has been said, nothing has happened in the history of the United States to arouse a German consciousness in the German-Americans as this war has. Already there has begun a renaissance of the German language and literature. In German homes where the German language was on the wane, it is again being spoken and studied. German papers that could hardly keep their heads above the water before the war broke out, now thrive and some of the weeklies have been changed into dailies.

After the Franco-German war, there was a revival of the German in the United States, and after this war is over and feelings are subdued, there will be a return to the study of the German language, literature, art, and all that stands for German culture. For fearful as has been the calamity for Germany in the loss of life and limb, only by this war could the world come to a knowledge of the herculean powers that lie within her, and her genius will be recognized and studied as never before. If "peace hath her victories as renowned as those of war," let us not forget that modern German culture is the product of a long peaceful conquest, she having had no war in fortythree years, during which time she rose to her eminence. All the nations of the earth have been made the beneficiaries of German culture, and that is exactly what Germany desires. But as all fair-minded men will give due

credit to England, France the United States, or any other country, for its achievements, so also should German culture be recognized and appreciated. Such an appreciation will go a long way toward bringing about a better understanding of the German people, their character, and world-position. **Germany as a member of the Christian family of nations, has "made good," and the chief end of her culture is to contribute the greatest possible amount of good to all mankind.**

"Macht und Freiheit, Recht und Sitte,
Klarer Geist und starker Hieb,
Zuegeln dann aus starker Mitte
Jeder Selbstsucht wilden Trieb.
Und es mag an deutschem Wesen
Noch einmal die Welt genesen."

MAR 78



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 640 246 4

